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Inman out

A "spooky" resignation

It will be hard to replace Bobby Ray Inman, the four-star admiral with 30 years intelligence experience, who resigned unexpectedly as second in command of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Widely respected by both political conservatives and liberals, Inman was being promoted as CIA director when the appointment went instead to President Reagan's friend and campaign manager, William Casey.

THINGS ARE NOT always as they seem in the murky world of spies and spooks so the complete story of Inman's departure may never be known.

One theory is he resigned over a counter-intelligence survey ordered by Reagan that would look into Inman's tenure as director, under Jimmy Carter, of the National Security Agency, the mammoth electronic intelligence arm of the federal government.

Another view is that Inman was reluctant to take the number two post in the CIA to begin with and became unhappier with defending policies he had opposed in rare public statements.

Early last year the 51-year-old admiral spoke against Reagan administration plans to "unleash" the CIA by eliminating restrictions on domestic spying and other questionable activities.

"I would not elect to carelessly walk away from the safeguards we have so carefully crafted together," Inman said. "These rules are to protect U.S. citizens, not anyone else,



Bobby Ray Inman

and I believe that we need to continue to protect them."

MANY SAW Inman, called "the conscience of the CIA," as a bulwark against spy agency excesses. This especially after approval of a new charter — satisfactory neither to hardliners nor civil libertarians — which allows some domestic operations.

Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee have warned the White House they still lack confidence in Casey. An investigation of past business practices found him "not unfit" to be CIA director, but his experience is limited.

Thus for the good of the agency and the country, Casey's new deputy should be an intelligence pro and not another political appointee.